'This is a very extremist era. And I hate extremes'

Charlotte Gainsbourg

all in g2 film&music →

The death of Lil Peep
Rap's problem with prescription pills

Reviews
Justice League ★★
Morrissey ★★★

Mudbound
Is this the end for whitewashed war movies?

£2.00
Friday 17.11.17
Published in London and Manchester
theguardian.com

theguardian

£1.60 for subscribers page 30 →

'Cult of personality' blamed as theatre apologises for Spacey

- Inquiry finds star power led to failings at Old Vic
- 20 allegations dating as far back as 1995 revealed
- Artistic director says unfair to say 'everyone knew'

Kevin Spacey is reportedly being treated at the same rehab clinic as Harvey Weinstein Photograph: Adrian Dennis/AFP/Getty

Mark Brown
Hannah Ellis-Petersen

A leading London theatre has apologised "wholeheartedly" for failing to create an environment in which people could raise concerns about Kevin Spacey after receiving 20 separate allegations of inappropriate behaviour by the star.

An inquiry into the actor-director's conduct during his 11 years at the Old Vic theatre, in south London, has concluded that his star power, which the theatre described as a "cult of personality", contributed to failings at the organisation.

The theatre said 14 of the 20 allegations against Spacey, who was its artistic director from 2004 to 2015, were so serious that it had advised complainants to take them to the police.

"The Old Vic apologises wholeheartedly to the people who told us they have been affected," the theatre's executive director, Kate Varah, said. "We've learned that it is not enough to have the right process in place. Everyone needs to feel able to speak out, no matter who they are."

The theatre has been criticised for remaining largely silent since allegations about Spacey emerged. But Varah said it had been important to properly investigate what went wrong.

"We have not slept since this came out, because we have been working incredibly hard to do this in a robust and detailed and measured and careful way," she said.

"It would have been easy for us to make a quick statement. It was not appropriate for us to do that because of the nature of the allegations."

The theatre opened a confidential complaints process after allegations against the actor emerged. It also hired the law firm Lewis Silkin to investigate.

Yesterday it said 56 people had contacted the theatre, with 20 individual allegations made of inappropriate conduct by Spacey. All were against young men over the age of 18; with 16 of them former staff. One testimony dated to 1995, 17 were from 2004-09, and two were after then. Allegations ranged from behaviour that made people feel uncomfortable to sexually inappropriate conduct. None of the allegations were of rape.

Claims against Spacey emerged last month, when he was accused of making unwanted sexual advances toward a Star Trek actor, Anthony Rapp, who said that in 1986, when he was 14, Spacey, then 26, lay on top of him and tried to "seduce" him.

Spacey said he did not recall the incident but if he did what Rapp described, it "would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behaviour".

The Old Vic said no formal complaints about Spacey were received during his tenure and that no board trustees were aware of any allegations. It found one case of a complainant telling a manager who was in the room at the time of an incident and the manager taking no further action.

The theatre's current artistic director, Matthew Warchus, said: "As somebody who worked here, in that period, and as a freelance director over the last 30 years, I've worked in pretty much every producing theatre in London ... this was in no way a toxic environment. My experience of working here was identical to every theatre I'd ever worked in.

"My big hope is that it doesn't reflect on the Old Vic as a name and a brand. It was a very, very hard situation to spot."

Asked how he felt about Spacey now, Warchus said: "This last month has cre-

Continued on page 2 →

Trump is a 'fascist kind of figure', says Stiglitz

Larry Elliott

The Nobel-prizewinning American economist Joseph Stiglitz has accused Donald Trump of fascist "tendencies", and said there was a risk that the president would push the nuclear button if prevented from getting his way.

In an interview with the Guardian, Stiglitz said Trump was a liar, a cheat, not fit to occupy the White House, and would have gone down to defeat in 2016 had Bernie Sanders rather than Hillary Clinton been the Democrat candidate.

Stiglitz, one of the world's most well known economists, who worked in the White House for Bill Clinton in the 1990s, said Trump's election victory had been the result of a failure to tackle inequality. He added that he had been fearful of the political consequences of stagnant living standards and falling life expectancy for the past six or seven years.

"I began to say if we didn't fix this problem we are going to have a political problem, and historically a Trump figure, a fascist kind of figure, arises."

Stiglitz said Trump had fascist "tendencies" but that he was held back by America's political system. "He is restrained by our institutions and every day those institutions work we feel relieved. We don't know what the bounds are and we don't know how far he would push those bounds.

"A couple of things are most disturbing – the attack on the press and the attack on the foundations of knowledge, which goes beyond the press.

"I think the other thing you have seen with some of these fascist leaders is using 'us versus them' as a way of dividing society."

Trump ran for office on a protectionist agenda and is seeking to pull out of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) between the US, Canada and Mexico, something opposed by big business.

"What I worry about is that when Trump is confronted with the reality that he can't do on Nafta what he wants to do, he will strike out like a little kid and do something dangerous, like putting his finger on a button he shouldn't be putting his finger on," Stiglitz said.

Interview, page 29 →

HouseBeautiful
sofas exclusively at dfs

Sophia 3 seater sofa **£998**
Guaranteed Christmas delivery on this sofa in display colour only – Ends Sunday.

dfs.co.uk/housebeautiful

Cushions included. 15 year guarantee applies to frames and frame springs on all sofas, chairs and footstools. Delivery charges apply.

Handcrafted in Britain
15 YEAR GUARANTEE